

Today's News - Wednesday, July 25, 2012

- As Olympic fever heats up, an economist explains "why hosting the Olympics is a loser's game."
- Vancouver's former planning chief begs to differ: the 2010 Games set "a new benchmark in civic transformation...the Olympics can be an incredible city and nation-changing moment - if it's designed that way."
- The double challenge for 2012 Olympic architects: "how to dazzle the multitudes while creating a viable, new neighborhood from scratch" in a "droopy east London" setting.
- An eyeful of the Coca-Cola Beatbox pavilion in Olympic Park that can be played like a musical instrument (soundtrack not included).
- Q&A with Oklahoma City mayor re: how the city turned around its downtown: "We convinced people who live in the suburbs that their quality of life is directly related to the intensity of the core, that you can't be a suburb of nothing."
- CSX donates the last stretch of the High Line to NYC, setting the stage for completion of the final stretch.
- Hinshaw's thoughtful two-parter on Seattle waterfront park plans: the design is "getting better, but...let's take a break for a little healthy skepticism, and keep that editing pencil handy."
- LeBlanc x 2: the West Toronto Railpath "may be the most important public space the city has created in the past decade."
- He cheers a Toronto subway station redesign that "links neighborhood and nature" to become "a major community-builder."
- The fate of a piece of public art in Trenton, NJ, raises the question: "should landscape architecture be preserved as art?"
- Tod Williams Billie Tsien and Davis Brody Bond tapped to design the new U.S. Embassy compound in Mexico City.
- The roof of Zaha's controversial cultural center in Baku, Azerbaijan, goes up in flames.
- 2012 EcoHome Design Awards to 17 winners (great presentation).
- The 2012 RIBA Lubetkin Prize shortlist of four.
- Vote for your favorite in the Students vs. Trash Competition.

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3 Reasons Why Hosting the Olympics Is a Loser's Game: (1) The bidding process is hijacked by private interests; (2) It creates massive over-building; (3) There's little evidence that it meaningfully increases tourism. By Andrew Zimbalist - The Atlantic

What Vancouver Gained By Hosting the Olympics: The Games have a lot of naysayers. But Vancouver's former planning chief says the 2010 games made his city stronger...a new benchmark in Olympics-related civic transformation...What's best for Londoners to remember is...the Olympics can be an incredible city and nation-changing moment — if it's designed that way... By Brent Toderian/TODERIAN UrbanWORKS [images, links]- The Atlantic Cities

Architects faced double challenge for London 2012: How to dazzle the multitudes...while creating a viable, new neighborhood from scratch...The idea of using the Olympics as a springboard for reviving this droopy east London setting may be laudable social engineering, but planners are aware that goals may be undercut if the area is not dynamic enough to grow on its own. -- Populous; Richard Burdett; Oliver Wainwright; Piers Gough; Zaha Hadid; Anish Kapoor (AP)- Huffington Post

Coca-Cola Beatbox by Asif Khan & Pernilla Ohrstedt: ...a pavilion in the London 2012 Olympic park that can be played like a musical instrument...by touching parts of its structure. [images]- Dezeen

Interview with Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett on the Power of Downtowns: "A city gets its identity from its core...we convinced people who live in the suburbs that...their quality of life is directly related to the intensity of the core, that you can't be a suburb of nothing." -- Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS); Jeff Speck [images, links]- The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Kickoff looms for High Line's last leg: CSX donates the stretch from West 30th to West 34th streets of the old freight railway to the city for conversion into the third and final piece of the popular elevated park. -- James Corner Field Operations; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Piet Oudolf [link to images]- Crain's New York Business

Waterfront park design: getting better, but...: The design has been scaled back as budget realities impinge. Is the one remaining "big move" too disruptive and expensive? + Four challenges to a great waterfront park: Our designers may be over-reaching, and they may be forgetting how we locals will use the park, year-round. By Mark Hinshaw -- James Corner Field Operations [images]- Crosscut (Seattle)

A forgotten finger of land now an important Toronto public space: ...West Toronto Railpath is more than a bike trail...that once contained a narrow-gauge railway line...this linear park may be the most important public space the city has created in the past decade. By Dave LeBlanc -- Brown + Storey Architects; Scott Torrance Landscape Architect [slide show]- Globe and Mail (Canada)

A Toronto subway station redesign links neighbourhood and nature: ...life for the TTC commuter at Victoria Park Station has forever changed for the better...has created connections where none existed before...become a major community-builder. By Dave LeBlanc -- Stevens Group Architects; Scott Torrance Landscape Architect; Brown + Storey Architects [slide show]- Globe and Mail (Canada)

Should Landscape Architecture Be Preserved as Art? The Case of Athena Tacha's "Green Acres" (1986): The conflict is emblematic of the challenges facing urban landscape architecture across the country...No one can agree whether or not to preserve these aging works as art or redevelop them as raw land. -- The Cultural Landscape Foundation/TCLF [image]- Artinfo

Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects/Davis Brody Bond Selected for New Embassy Project in Mexico City: ...project is the first solicited under OBO's (Overseas Buildings Operations) Design Excellence program and will demonstrate the value of an integrated design that balances aesthetics, cost, constructability, and reliability.- U.S. Department of State

Fire damages Zaha's Baku cultural centre: The roof of Zaha Hadid's controversial Heydar Aliyev Cultural Centre in Azerbaijan has gone up in flames...The interior...was not damaged by the blaze... [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

2012 EcoHome Design Awards: 17 award-winning projects show continued progress in environmental design... --

Ferguson-Ettinger Architects; ZeroEnergy Design; Handel Architects; MQ Architecture & Design; KTGY Group; Thoughtful Balance/Rothschild Doyno Collaborative; Gulch Design Group; G+O Logic; Mojarrab Stanford Architects; Lake|Flato Architects; Vallaster Corl Architects; Russell E LaFrombois, III; JSW/D Architects; Furman + Keil Architects; Arkin Tilt Architects; Torti Gallas and Partners/McGranahan Architects; A4 Architecture + Planning [images]- EcoHome magazine

2012 RIBA Lubetkin Prize: China, Malaysia, US and Singapore make impressive international shortlist -- Foster + Partners; Wilkinson Eyre Architects; TR Hamzah & Yeang/CPG; SCDA Architects [images]- World Architecture News (UK)

Students Vs. Trash Competition: Who Will be the Top Trash Conquerors? Vote for your favorite design; deadline: September 30- Students Vs. Trash

The Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence Marks 25 Years: New Director Anne-Marie Lubenau, AIA, reflects on the past, looks to the future.- ArchNewsNow



Urbanus: Nanshan Marriage Registration Center, Shenzhen, China: a new architectural idea that gives an experience for life and a permanent memory of the journey of marriage to new couples.

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